

space (57) for movement for the common hinge (G) is provided by the removal of material (56), in the laid condition of two panels (40, 41).

15. A fastening system according to claim 12 characterised in that the opening (52) of a panel (41) can be enlarged for connection to the projection (44) of a further panel (40) by resilient deformation of the lower wall (53) and the resilient deformation of the lower wall (53) which occurs during the joining operation is reversed again in the finished joined condition of two panels (40, 41).

16. A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that the positively engaging profiles (42, 43) are formed integrally at the narrow sides of the panels (40, 41).

17. A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that the panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) substantially comprise and MDF, HDF or chipboard material.

18. A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that in the laid condition of the panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) the free spaces (57, 58) for movement for the common hinges (G) are provided with a filler (60) which hardens in soft-elastic form.

19. A panel with a fastening system according to claim 1.

#### REMARKS

Entry and consideration of this Preliminary Amendment is respectfully requested prior to or concurrent with calculation of the fees. This Preliminary Amendment is submitted in order to remove multiple claim dependencies so as to avoid the surcharge. Claims 3, 4, 6,

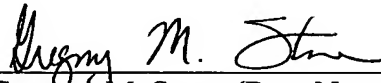
8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are amended herein, and no new claims have been added.

Thus, claims 1-19 are pending in the application.

Examination on the merits of this application is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

12/21/01  
Date

  
Gregory M. Stone (Reg. No. 43,165)  
Attorney for Applicant  
Whiteford, Taylor & Preston L.L.P.  
Seven Saint Paul Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-1626  
(410) 659-6402

1395432

**MARKED VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS**

3. (Amended) A fastening system according to claim 1 [or claim 2] characterised in that the hook projection (4f, 5f, 28, 29) of the leg (4e, 5e, 26, 27) at the underside bears in the assembled condition of a panel (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) against the leg (4e, 53, 26, 27) at the top side of a second panel (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) and that provided between the hook projection (4f, 5f, 28, 29) of the leg (4e, 5e, 26, 27) at the top side of the first panel (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) and the leg (4e, 5e, 26, 27) at the underside of the second panel (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) is clearance (L1) or vice-versa.

4. (Amended) A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 3] characterised in that the retaining surfaces (4g, 5g, 33, 34) of the hook projections (4f, 5f, 28, 29) engage behind each other in such a way that complementary hook projections (4f, 5f, 28, 29) can be hooked one into the other only by elastic deformation.

6. (Amended) A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 4] characterised in that at least one of the ends (30, 35) of a hook element (24, 25) of a panel (22, 23) has at its free end a projecting detent element (31, 36) which in the assembled condition engages into an undercut recess (32, 37) of the hook element (24, 25) of the other panel (22, 23).

8. (Amended) A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 3 [to 5] characterised in that the intermediate spaces provided with clearance in the assembled condition of two panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) form adhesive pockets.

9. A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 8] characterised in that the retaining profiles (4a, 4b, 5b, 20, 21) of the long narrow sides are in the form of complementary positively engaging profiles (42, 43), wherein the positively engaging profile (42) of one panel (40) forms a common hinge (G) with the complementary positively engaging profile (43) of a second panel (41) in the laid condition and the hinge (G) is to be assembled by a rotary joining movement of the panels (40, 41).

14. A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 12 [or 13] characterised in that the lower wall (53) of the opening (52) of a panel (41), which is towards the base (U), has on its inside an inclined removal of material (56) which extends to the free end of the lower wall (53) and the wall thickness of said wall (53) is increasingly thinner towards the free end, wherein a free space (57) for movement for the common hinge (G) is provided by the removal of material (56), in the laid condition of two panels (40, 41).

15. A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 12 [to 14] characterised in that the opening (52) of a panel (41) can be enlarged for connection to the projection (44) of a further panel (40) by resilient deformation of the lower wall (53) and the resilient deformation of the lower wall (53) which occurs during the joining operation is reversed again in the finished joined condition of two panels (40, 41).

16. A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 8] characterised in that the positively engaging profiles (42, 43) are formed integrally at the narrow sides of the panels (40, 41).

17. A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 9] characterised in that the panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) substantially comprise and MDF, HDF or chipboard material.

18. A fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 10] characterised in that in the laid condition of the panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) the free spaces (57, 58) for movement for the common hinges (G) are provided with a filler (60) which hardens in soft-elastic form.

19. A panel with a fastening system according to [one of claims] claim 1 [to 18].